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Response To Restriction Requirement

REMARKS

This communication is in response to the Office Action of January 11, 2007, wherein 22 species were identified and election of a single species was required.

In response, Applicants provisionally elect species 15, corresponding to Figures 38 & 39. Claims 1-20 are readable upon the elected species.

Applicants further request that species 12-14 be combined into the elected species.

Elected species 15 illustrates at least one embodiment of an "auxiliary access opening" as recited in claim 1, and as described in the specification with reference numeral 255. See e.g. paragraph 0085.

Species 12-14, corresponding to Figures 35-37, also illustrate examples of stent patterns having the "auxiliary access opening." See e.g. Figure 35, provided below, specifically item 255.

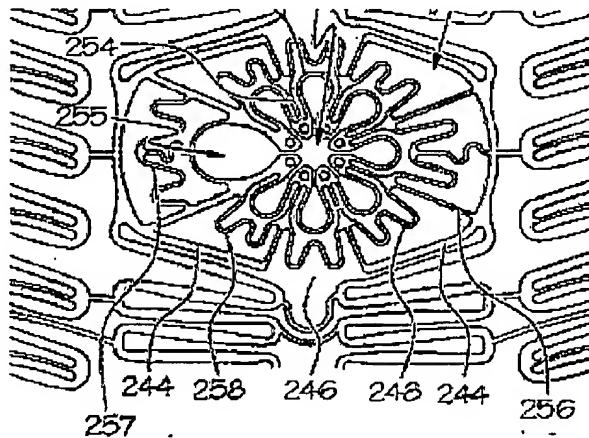


FIG. 35

Independent claims 1, 18 and 20 are each generic to non-elected species 12-14, as well as elected species 15. Because the stent patterns illustrated in species 12-15 each include similar ring patterns having the auxiliary access opening, the USPTO would not experience any undue burden in examining species 12-14 on the merits along with elected species 15. Therefore, Applicants request that Figures 35-37 be incorporated into elected species 15.

Applicants note however that in addition to those species identified in the Office

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Action as corresponding to specific figures depicted in the Application, additional species may exist which are described in the specification and claims and which are not subject to the restriction requirement identified by the Office Action.

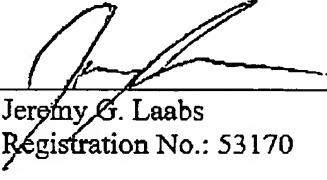
Conclusion

In view of the foregoing it is believed that the present application, with claims 1-20 is in condition for allowance. Early action to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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